A Study on Assessment of Quality Attributes of E-Governance Projects

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Abstract: E-Governance provides tremendous prospective to increase standards of living and broaden opportunities for individuals, communities, countries and regions. E-Governance can explore the conditions for information and knowledge exchange, dissimilation and utilization. The initiation of the information society is creating unparalleled conditions for exercising these functions. By using e-government applications, communication between administrations, citizens and businesses can be improved governance and public sector management, access economic and social opportunities and overpass the digital divide within a the social order . E-Governance can transform the existing government system and consolidate the inclusive governance system through digital form that is capable of exercising its powers and functions with optimistic way. A government system that is dedicated to working with civil society in a transparent and accountable manner to trim down poverty, safeguard the environment, redress inequality, increase security and fulfil social, economic, cultural, civic and political rights. Citizen is increasingly seen as the main engine to bridge the digital divide at country level. Public agencies can start acting as model users of e-Governence system and be catalysts for others to follow. Local Government is providing number of e-governance services to common citizen. It is necessity to assess impact of various e-Gov. projects and its impact on society with social, economic, cultural and technical dimensions. Objective of this paper is to throws lights on various projects of local government, various challenges faced in e-governance projects and assessing its impact on society.

Key Words: ICT, e-governance, local government, digital divide

1. Introduction

The prefix 'e' indicates that an activity is 'electronic' or digital in nature. e-government simply refer to the use of electronic information and communication technologies in undertaking various government activities, in public , education, health, agriculture, customs sector. E-governance should be regarded as an alternative and complementary approach to government administration and service delivery, as well as a means to redefine the way it interacts with citizens and the private sector. In this sense: 'E' means :Efficiency: Governments should use ICT to minimize transaction costs and streamline their bureaucratic procedures, making their operations more efficient, freeing up resources that enable them to deliver services in a better organized and economical manner.

Effectiveness: Governments can achieve better results and meet development goals by using ICTs to increase the relevancy of the policy formulation process through increased participation, improve the process of resource allocation, and respond timely to citizen's needs and increase coverage and quality of their services.

Empowerment: e-Governance can support increased interaction between citizens and governments, for citizens both to participate in the decision-making process and to become more aware of their personal and community development.

Economic and social development: Beyond the economic benefits that accrue to government due to efficiency and effectiveness gains, the use of ICTs in government and in its interaction with the business community and citizens can create new businesses, attract investments and generate employment. E-Governance is used "to prepare India for a knowledge future", "to make technology central to enabling change".

2. Recent E-Governance Initiatives

Table-1
List e-Gov. MMP projects

Mission Mode Projects		
Central MMPs	State MMPs	Integrated MMPs
• e-Office • UID • Pension • Banking • Central Excise & Customs • Income Tax (IT) • Insurance • MCA21 • Passport • Immigration, Visa and Foreigners Reg. & Tracking • Posts	• Municipalities • e-Panchayats • e−District • Land Records(NLRMP) • PDS • Agriculture • Commercial Taxes • Employment Exchange • Police(CCTNS) • Road Transport • Treasuries Computerization • Education • Health	• CSC • Service Delivery Gateway • National e-governance • India Portal • e-Biz • e-Courts • e-Procurement • EDI For eTrade

Common Services Centres: A highlight of the CSCs is that it will offer web-enabled e-governance services in rural areas, including application forms, certificates, and utility payments such as electricity, telephone and water bills.CSCs provide high quality and cost-effective video, voice and data content and services, in the areas of e-governance, education, health, telemedicine, entertainment as well as other private services.

Direct Cash transfer: It facilitate disbursements of Government entitlements like LPG gas subsidy, student scholarship, NREGA, Social Security pension, Handicapped Old Age Pension etc. of Central or State Government bodies,

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using Aadhaar and authentication thereof as supported by UIDAI.

Aadhaar Enabled Payment system (AEPS): It is a bank led model which allows online interoperable financial inclusion transaction through the Business correspondent of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication. This has helped in financial inclusion.

Digital India Program: Digital India aims to transform the country into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. It would also bring in public accountability through mandated delivery of government's services electronically. The program aims at providing digital infrastructure as a utility to every citizen as well as high-speed internet as a core utility in all local self-governments.

E-Kranti: Project for linking the internet with remote villages in the country. Program will broaden the reach of internet services to the rural areas in the country. It includes Expansion of internet and commencement of IT-based jobs in rural areas. It will also boost the use of mobile phones and computers in rural areas and expand the use of IT in agriculture.

Digital Cloud for every Indian: Various certificates issued by the government to citizens eg. Birth certificate, education, residential, medical records etc., are to be stored in individual 'digital lockers' and a communication protocol established for government departments to access them without physically having to see the hard copy.

M-Governance: M-Gov. is the use of mobile or wireless to improve Governance service and information "anytime, anywhere". Mobile applications rely on good back office ICT infrastructure and work processes. Various services are mostly SMS based: banking, media, airlines, telecom, entertainment, news, sports, astrology, and movie tickets etc.

3. Reasons for E-Governance Implementation

Speed: Technology makes communication speedier. Internet, Phones, Cell Phones have reduced the time taken in normal communication.

Cost Reduction: Most of the Government expenditure is appropriated towards the cost of stationary. Paper-based communication needs lots of stationary, printers, computers, etc. which calls for continuous heavy expenditure. Internet and Phones makes communication cheaper saving valuable money for the Government

Transparency: Use of e-governance makes governing process transparent. All the information of the Government would be made available on the internet. The citizens can see the information whenever they want to see. But this is only possible when every piece of information of the Government is uploaded on the internet and is available for the public to peruse.

Accountability: Once the governing process is made transparent the government is automatically made accountable. Accountability is answerability of the government to the people. It is the answerability for the deeds of the government. An accountable government is a responsible government.

Improved customer service and convenience: E-Governance allows redeploying resources from back-end processing to the front line of citizen service at their own convenience.

Increased access to information: E-Governance improves the accessibility of government information to citizens allowing it become an important resource in the making the decisions that affect daily life and so it helps in empowerment of citizens.

4. Need of Assessment of E-Governance Projects

Government have initiated various e-governance projects but it is necessary to assess these project which provides various services. Assessment should be carried out with various dimensions like: Understanding impact of projects on society, efficiency, security, performance utility, sustainability, scalability and replicability of these projects.

5. Hurdles in E-Governance Implementation

There are large numbers of hurdles in the implementation of e-Governance. Some hindrance in the path of implementation, like access to the various application systems by the citizen, information security and high initial cost for setting up the e government solutions and resistance to change. Following are various identified challenges:

Digital divide: The digital divide means to the gap that exists between individuals, communities, and businesses that have access ICT and those that do not have such access due to various economical, geographical reason. India is a country using various languages in day to day life due to its integrity in diversity nature but applications are not available all regional languages.

Trust: The transmission of various citizen services via e-government requires the presence of two levels of trust. The first is that the user must be confident on applications, comfortable and authentication of the tool or technology with which they will interact. Another dimension of trust pertains to trust of the government.

Resistance to change: The resistant to change phenomenon can explain much of the vacillation that occurs on the part of constituents in moving from a paper based to a Web-based system for interacting with government. Citizens, employees and businesses can all have their biases with respect to how transactions should be processed.

Cost: Cost is one of the attribute that comes in the way of e-governance implementation particularly countries like India where in proportion of population, most of the people living below the poverty line.

Privacy and Security: There are various levels of access exist for stakeholders of e-governance: null access to a Web service; average access to a web-service or complete access to a Web service, however when certain citizen's personal sensitive data exists in e-governance application. Various e-governance applications have missing clear security standards. E.g. recently ADHAR data was available with minor cost.

6. Conclusion

This paper throws lights on concept of e-governance, various initiatives taken by Indian government with reference central,

state and local self-government in Indian. Paper also highlights various benefits e-governance to citizen with reference to transparency, accountability, corruption and cost of service. Government have initiated various projects but it is necessary to study impact of these projects on society with various dimensions. Government should take into consideration of direct participation of citizens while making e-governance policy and designing governance services. The innovation in ICT services in India has enlarged in the last decade and can play very vital role in decreasing corruption, poverty by providing various government services with minimum cost to citizens, can reduce mediator's role in getting services from government. But at the same time, it is necessary to assess e-governance project with various technological, social attributes for getting desired result from e-governance applications.

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